

~~SECURITY INFORMATION~~~~EYES ONLY~~

APR 13 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence.
 THROUGH: Deputy Director (Administration)
 SUBJECT: Polygraph Operations Within CIA

1. Following is a brief account of the history, method of operation and results of the polygraph program as used since its inception within this Agency.

a. History

(1) Early in 1948, at the direction of the DCI, research was begun to determine the application of the polygraph to security problems. At that time the research was aimed principally at developing a quick method of security clearances in the event of a national emergency. On 23 August 1948 the Director of Central Intelligence issued a memorandum to all Assistant Directors (Tab A), informing that the Office of Security was directed "to conduct research and planning in the use of technical devices which could improve and expedite the conduct of personnel security investigations in time of emergency." This directive authorized the testing of employees or applicants on a voluntary basis.

(2) Early research with the polygraph immediately indicated that it had a definite application to security problems. In October 1948 polygraph examinations were given persons in connection with their clearances for Special Intelligence. Following this use and in order to increase the number of cases tested for experimental purposes, all employees of the Security Office voluntarily took polygraph examinations. This effort was extended initially to cover high ranking officials of the Agency; then, other offices as units.

(3) Because of the excellent results obtained from the preliminary use of the polygraph thus far, it was decided in the spring of 1951 to expand the program to include routine screening of employees prior to departure for overseas assignments, as well as employees returning from extended periods of overseas duty. In the fall of 1951 a procedure was initiated whereby all applicants, as a part of their entry on duty processing, were given polygraph examinations on a voluntary basis. This program has continued without interruption.

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(4) Recently a survey of the Office of the Deputy Director (Plans) revealed that, with the exception of approximately two hundred persons, all personnel of that office have been polygraphed.

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b. Method of Use of the Polygraph

(1) Throughout its history within the Agency the polygraph has always been used as a technical aid to interrogation and as an adjunct to background investigations. Each polygraph examination is given on a voluntary basis and each individual so signifies by a signed statement prior to the examination. No Agency regulations have been issued making polygraph examination compulsory, and no employee has been discharged because of refusal to take a polygraph test.

(2) Each polygraph examination is preceded by an explanation of the machine and the procedure. All questions of a security nature asked during the test are read to the individual before the test begins, thus, giving complete opportunity for refusal to proceed with the test. As mentioned above, refusal has not been used as a cause for dismissal. Similarly, no adverse action has been taken solely on the basis of reactions on the machine. Action is based only on admissions received during interrogation or on further evidence developed through investigation of leads revealed in the tests.

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(2) Throughout the polygraph program only four persons have refused to volunteer to take the examinations. These persons are still employed by the Agency. *

(3) The above statistics are considered by this office to be extremely sensitive.

3. Considering the results of the polygraph program and its benefits from a security standpoint, I am convinced that its use since 1948 has immeasurably increased the security of this Agency.

SIGNED

Sheffield Edwards
Colonel, GSC
Director of Security

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Attachment

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